

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6198

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CI

SUBJECT: PINOCHET UNDERSCORES ELECTION TIMETABLE ANNOUNCED JULY 9

REF: SANTIAGO 5634

1. PRESIDENT PINOCHET AUGUST 19 STATED THAT UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES ELECTIONS IN CHILE COULD NOT BE HELD "BEFORE 8 TO 10 YEARS"--HE HAD SAID BY 1984-85 IN HIS JULY 9 SPEECH (REFTEL)--AND EXHORTED CHILEANS TO "WORK FOR CHILE AND EARN YOUR BREAD" IN THE MEANTIME. SPEAKING IN THE PROVINCIAL TOWN OF LOS ANGELES, HE USED STRONGLY WORDED TERMS IN BLASTING "THOSE FEW CHILEANS WHO SEEK FOREIGNERS SUPPORT FOR THEIR POLITICAL AMBITIONS", A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE RECENT MEETING HERE BETWEEN DEPARTMENT AND CONGRESSIONAL VIPS AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS.

2. PINOCHET LABELLED HIS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO RETURN THE COUNTRY TO CIVILIAN RULE AS A "CALCULATED RISK" AND SAID THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN MISTAKEN WHEN HE HAD SAID THAT "PERSONAL AND POLITICAL AMBITIONS WOULD BLOSSOM DUE TO THE IMPATIENCE OF MANY." HE STATED THAT THOSE WHO ARGUE FOR A "HASTY RETURN TO NORMALCY FORGET THAT THIS WOULD TAKE US TO CHAOS AND FAILURE", AND SAID THAT THE
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PLAN WAS PREDICATED ON "CONTINUED POSITIVE SIGNS" IN THE COUNTRY, WARNING THAT THE ELECTION TIMETABLE MIGHT BE PROLONGED, SHOULD THEY NOT APPEAR.

3. THE PRESIDENT SPECIFICALLY REJECTED THE POSSIBILITY OF UNION ELECTIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SAYING THAT UNIONS WERE INSTRUMENTS IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE (IN THE PAST) AND

MUST WAIT A "NECESSARY AMOUNT OF TIME BEFORE RETURNING TO NORMALCY". HE CLAIMED THAT ONLY THE MARXISTS OR THOSE USED BY THE MARXISTS DID NOT ACCEPT THIS AND THAT THEY SOUGHT THE APPLICATION OF EXTERNAL PRESSURE ON CHILE.

4. COMMENT: PINOCHET'S REMARKS REFLECT THE GOC'S CONCERN OVER THE CONSIDERABLE PRESS PLAY AND COMMENT GIVEN THE TIMETABLE FOR ELECTIONS, WHICH MANY HAVE NOT HESITATED TO CRITICIZE AS BEING TOO LONG. THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT HAPPY EITHER WITH A LA SEGUNDA NEWS ACCOUNT IN WHICH "DINAMICO" LABOR LEADER EDUARDO RIOS REPORTEDLY TOLD THE CODEL YATRON ON AUGUST 17 THAT HE HOPED THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT WOULD BRING CERTAIN CHANGES TO CHILE. THE AUGUST 19 STATEMENT HAD AT LEAST THREE PURPOSES: TO WARN GOC OPPONENTS AND CRITICS NOT TO GET OVERLY EXALTED IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND DEBATES ON THE TRANSITION; TO SERVE NOTICE (IN THE WAKE OF THREE USG VISITS) THAT CHILEANS WILL DETERMINE THEIR OWN OBJECTIVES AND PACE OF PROGRESS; AND FINALLY TO REAFFIRM HIS OWN PREFERENCE FOR A SLOW AND CAUTIOUS RETURN TO ELECTED GOVERNMENT. BOYATT

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